

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of James G. Tribble Appl. No.: To Be Assigned (Divisional of Appl. No. 10/053,793, filed January 18, 2002) Filed: Herewith For: Metal/Wood Bat Connection Assembly	Art Unit: To Be Assigned Examiner: To Be Assigned Atty Docket: 808690/00003DIV
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Preliminary Amendment

Commissioner for Patents
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

Prior to the first examination, please amend this application as follows.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for additional claims are required beyond those which may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this Amendment. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and any fees therefor or for additional claims are hereby authorized to be charged to our Deposit Account 19-4295.

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In the Specification:

Please amend the Specification as follows:

Page 6, Lines 20-29

(currently amended) In the preferred embodiment, the connection assembly of the present invention optionally comprises three components: an exterior sleeve 200, an interior sleeve 300, and/or a pin assembly, e.g., a locking pin 400 or a roll pin 600. The interior sleeve 300 is an elongated, cone shaped, rubber tube that tapers from a top opening 306 to a bottom opening 308 such that the diameter of the top opening 306 is larger than the diameter of the bottom opening 308. In the preferred embodiment, the interior sleeve 300 is about three inches in length and is made from about 1/16 of an inch thick rubber, e.g., 40 ~~decrometer~~ durometer gum rubber. A tacky, gum rubber is preferred because of its natural adhesion properties, thereby eliminating the need for an adhesive. The length, top opening 306 and bottom opening 308 of the interior sleeve 300 are sized such that the fitting portion 104 of the wood barrel portion 102 fits snuggly within the interior sleeve 300.

Page 6, Line 30 through Page 7, Lines 1-5

(currently amended) Once the interior sleeve 300 is placed over the fitting portion 104 of the wood barrel portion 102, the fitting portion 104 with the interior sleeve 300 is pressure fit within the barrel receiving end 114 of the metal handle portion 110, thereby creating a seam 502 between the wood barrel portion 102 and the metal handle portion 110. Preferrably Preferably the fitting portion 104 is inserted into the barrel receiving end 114 such that the top opening 306 of the interior sleeve 300 is slightly below the seam 502.

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Page 7, Lines 9-25:

(currently amended) In one embodiment of a pin assembly, a locking pin 400 is used to secure the metal handle portion 110 to the wood barrel portion 102, passing through the metal handle portion 110, the interior sleeve 300, and the fitting portion 104 of the wood barrel portion 102. The preferred embodiment of the locking pin 400 is shown in FIG. 4, wherein the locking pin 400 is a commercially available stainless steel press fit pin, about 1/8 of an inch by about 1 ½ inches, having a male component 402 and a female component 404. In operation, the male component 402 is pressure fit, point end 410 first, into the opening 412 of the female component 404 such that they are locked together. The male component 402 is also preferably preferably serrated in order to achieve a tighter and more secure lock within the female component 404. In addition, both the head end 406 of the male component 402 and the head end 408 of the female component 404 are flat surfaces that are wider in diameter than the shaft of the female component 404.

In operation, the female component 404 is inserted into one side of the hole 504 in the bat 100 until the head end 408 of the female femal component 404 is flush with, or approximately flush with, the exterior surface of the metal handle portion 110. The male component 402 is inserted into the opposite side of the hole 504 and pressure fit within the female component 404 until the head end 406 of the male component 402 is flush with, or approximately flush with, the exterior surface of the metal handle portion 110.

Page 8, Lines 11-23

(currently amended) Once a pin assembly, e.g. locking pin 400 or roll pin 600, is installed within the bat 100, the exterior sleeve 200 is applied to the bat 100. In the preferred embodiment, the exterior sleeve 200 is a rubber elastomer, being an elongated cone-shaped tube of about 1 ½ to 3 ½ inches in length and having an exterior surface 202, an interior surface 204, a top opening 208 and a bottom opening 210. Similar to the interior sleeve 300, the exterior sleeve 200 tapers from the top opening 208 to the bottom opening 210 resulting in the top opening 208 having a diameter

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greater than the bottom opening 210. The contour of the interior surface 204 of the exterior sleeve 200 is approximate to the contour of the exterior surface of the seam 502 and the transition 106 between the wood barrel portion 102 and the metal handle portion 110, which in the preferred embodiment is generally "hour glass" shaped having an indent 206 at the position of the seam 502. The exterior surface 202 is generally smooth and straight in shape. Also in the preferred embodiment, the exterior sleeve 200 is preferably made of a hard, durable rubber, e.g., a urethane 60 decrometer durometer rubber such as liquid Flexane commercially available by Devcon.